The Concept of Oneness with God: A Comparative Study of Farid-ud-Din Attar and Kabir's Selected Works

A

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work which is being presented in the synopsis, entitled **"The Concept of Oneness with God: A Comparative Study of Farid-ud-Din Attar and Kabir's Selected Works",** submitted to Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab is an original piece of research work completed under the guidance of **Dr. Manjinder Kaur Wratch, Assistant Professor, Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab.**

The matter embodied in this synopsis has not been submitted by me for the award of any other degree of any other institute or university.

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Introduction

Sufism is characterised and recognised under religious scope and purview as a spiritual path to the Ultimate reality. It in Islamic ethos is known as 'TASAWUF' which literally means "To dress in Wool" in Arab world, which however, in western language has been christened as 'Sufism', derived from the word 'Sufi' which means 'Mystic', which also is taken from another word 'Suf' meaning 'Wool', which again conceivably refers to the 'Woolen Robs' of Islamic ascetics. This word is possibly explained and discussed with reference to 'Saf' which means clean. The same is caught up as "One belief holds that the word 'Sufism' comes from 'safa' which symbolises purity of thought and action" (Uzair 10). The semantic variation does not stop yet; Sufis are also known as *Fuqura*, *Dervish*, *Faker*, *etc.* The quintessence of Sufism can be well understood from an ever famous Hadith by Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) that whosoever knows himself, knows his Lord.

Sufism or Tasawuf is thus self realisation which unlocks the gates to God realisation. In broader sense, Sufism is an Islamic belief in which a seeker endeavors to seek and find the truth of his being, divine love with his God as creator, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. As God is eternal truth and reality, man in his endeavor is in the struggle against his dog-self in the acquirement of spiritual 'Summum Bonum' which is the 'highest good' in his subjective cosmos. On the foundations of laying extreme goodness conditioned to rising above the mundane world, some hold "Sufism as an exalted wellspring of spirituality and beauty'' (Chittick 3). Man as a seeker of eternal truth of his being, restores his cachet and panache of his creation in the ambit of multifarious beings. Man is trained to stay aloof from the world of evanescence in order that he is able to be in unison with God.

In the aura of Sufism, condition-less love for God is taught vehemently, because it is dissociated from the inclusion of ego that rises up to the duality. The Sufi ascends up to the level whereupon all shades of meanness are vanished and he is transcendental in his quest. Equanimity of mind and elimination of ego are must in the Sufi exercise. Then in the words of Jami, man can have love as the road to reach the ultimate reality as; "You may try hundred things, but love alone will release you from yourself. So never flee from love- not even from love in an earthly guise- for it is a preparation for the supreme" (Lee 156).

Islamic Mysticism (Tasawuf) is wholly grounded on the five pillars of Islam which are *Kalma, Nimaz, Roza, Zakat and Hajj* which the followers must follow to live their life under the constitution of God. Under these five pillars one can submit all his affairs to God who is treated as the best planner. It is mentioned that the prophet defined submission as "to bear the witness that there is no god but god and that Muhammad is his messenger to perform the daily prayers, to pray the alms tax, to fast during Ramadan, and to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca if you can find the means to do so" (5).

Methodologically, the path of Sufism is initiated as the system with *Toba* (Repentance) under which spiritual guide directs the disciple to follow and act in accordance with some suitable and strict ascetic practices as a formula for the attainment of meditation. Along with it, the guide constantly emphasises upon the disciples to progressively struggle for the reduction of their ego which metaphorically is signified as the 'black dog' which should be under control but not killed.

The Sufi (Mystic) passes through many hierarchical states called *Maqam* (stations) indicating the ascension of purifying the self. Thereafter, is the role of abstinence which is a sort of self enforced restriction from indulging carnal activities giving pleasure, then renunciation- the formal conscious rejection of the things which supposedly halt spiritual search of the disciple and then poverty which means willed determination of disposing what is supposed to be for the sake of God's bless and benevolence. This is substantial and can be verified by the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that 'Poverty is my Pride'. This poverty in sufi realms connotes to the selflessness or disinterest in anything except God. By virtue of this unique qualification, the seeker is referred to as fakir or dervish. Among various methods of immaculateness and emasculation of negative vigor, patience and thankfulness are of greater importance.

In self-illumination process, the Sufi experiences varied states like *Qabd* and *Bast* which mean constraint and happy spiritual expansion, fear and discretion, closeness, etc. bestowed by God. With the passage of time, the holy quest at its peak culminates in the interior knowledge called *Marifah* (true realisation) and *Mohabah* (love) which have been as the kernel of Sufism since 19th century. The last and final stage is known as *Fanah* which refers to as self annihilation. In crystal clear Sufi ethics, it is taken up as self affliction to imbibe the divine attributions to experience the state of *Baqa* (eternity) in pre eminence which is living in God. This spiritual synthesis is called intoxication, after which followers return to the world as witness to the God's

grace and keep up with journeying in the same. The station in Sufism is connoted to as *Haqikah* (reality). Hereupon, annihilation in the master, annihilation in the Prophet and annihilation in God share chain of eternity.

Historically, Sufism emerged as an attempt to understand the human psychology in a better way. As such, spiritual mystics have been in the process of attaining the ambition via practicing varied practices individually and collectively. Sufism, however, emerged uniquely enrooted spiritually and literarily in philosophical movements under the jurisdiction of Islamic *Shariah.* The chief components or principles of it would take the Sufi to salvation and devotion, thereupon. Formatively, the origins of Sufism are seldom traced back to the days of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with his *Shariah* and the holy book 'The Qur'an' revealed over him which are taken as the sole sources for a disciplined life. Later these two sources are interpreted by the Islamic literate followers and as such, the spiritual massage was propagated in different regions of the world. The Islamic world witnessed nonplussed times of prosperity and other developments when Abbasid Caliphs had the throne of power and rule in the year 750 BCE. Along with prosperity and development in the spheres of Science, Philosophy, Mathematics, Art, Literature and Architecture, Muslims had significant pace in the spread of theological thought with the encounter of new changes and advancements in the study of the Qur'an and the Shariah by ever great reverenced scholars: Abu Hanifa, Malik Ibn-Anas, Ash-Shafi and Ahmad Ibn-Hanbal. Such Islamic icons established four different Islamic orthodox schools enrooting the essence in principles mentioned in the Qur'an and the Islamic *Shariah*.

Although, thereafter, there were issues and brisk debates on theology, Sufism grew uniquely with maintaining impartiality, purely balanced in oneness of everything. At first, meditational manners and techniques were simple as they clung to the Qur'an for guidance and spiritual inspiration. The early Sufis followed the Quranic path with the surcharge of spiritual panache. The Sufis acknowledged Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) their ideal and first spiritual guide. Since the days of formation, in Sufism the world of matter has been treated as unstable and ephemeral and with this, the priority of the Sufis has been the spiritual path rather than pragmatic thought alone. When Islam witnessed first Civil War in 661 Hijri, Sufis had their concern over the turmoil. They stressed for the cumulative peace and serenity. In the first Golden Era, when in 717 CE Rabia Basri was born and she became the celebrated Sufi doyen as a female. She was

born when everywhere there was established Umayed Caliphate. With the passage of time, new and new lands came under the influence of Islam during 8th century, which resulted in the influx of religious conversion. In the times to come then, there was experience of cementing Sufi orders among which *Qadiriya* order was famous which came after the great ever respected saint namely Abdul Qadir Jeelani.

The rise of Sufism witnessed more essential and productive period during 12th and 13th century in the magnificence of Persian poetry, the calibre of Al-Ghazzali's intellectual insight and the spiritual taste of Rumi's Mathnavi. With such eminence 14th century was associated particularly with the thought of Tasawuf. In the Western world, Sufi consciousness was also developed at greater pace which had been known there since 8th century during conquering Spain under Umayad Caliphate. However, the actual flare of Sufism came much later when some great Oriental scholars like R.A Nicholson, Edward Fitzgerald, Sir Richard Burton, etc. translated Persian and Arabian works and introduced to the Western readership.

Tasawuf and its essence was propagated with Sufi practices of great Sufi saints like Hassan Basri, Rabia Basri, Ibrahim Ibni Adham, Shaqiq of Balkh, Dhul-Nun, Bayazid al-Bistami, Abu Al Qadim, Al Junaid, Mansur al-Hallaj, Abu Bakir, Abu Hamid Muhammad Al Ghazzali, Farid-ud-Din Attar, Ibn Arabi, Jalal-ud-din Rumi, Saad ad-Din Mahmud Shabistari, Ghazi Saiyad Salar Sahu bin Attaullah Alavi, Ghazi Saiyed Salar Masood, etc.

Fundamentally, Sufism or mysticism aims at human goodness in all aspects. Essentially, it is associated with the human substance which testifies it culturally, socially, religiously, politically, ethically, etc. In Western world it is introduced as subject at college and university levels in order that in relation to other worldly developments, people can imbibe in themselves human values when such values are crumbling down rapidly after the run of worldly gains in the materialistic world . He can touch the skies but spiritually he can grow up ignorant. No doubt the world has been bedecked with innumerable blessings of science and technology but the painful reality is that the scientific blessings have not yet developed to such an altitude that it can wipe away human miseries, languor, and other jejune issues. His life is tangled in stress and depression. This is because there is a crevice and fissure between him and his creator. Dissociation with the Creator can't prove man as a true human. This dissociation has set the world in the jeopardy of acute crimes, absurdity, uselessness, loss of conscience. Has not such

been the fact, there would not have been bloodshed in the world. Sufism or Mysticism from time to time has been proving itself as the uniting force for man to live peacefully conditioned to the submission to his Creator. Unfortunately, either it has been taken mistakenly as social retrogression, backwardness or only a few took it as it is really. Realistically, it promotes human betterment and so contributes in all domains of humanity. In the field of psychology, Sufism is applied to find spiritual antidote to human worries and anxiety. It teaches a person to be content with what God has given to him and express His gratitude and recite His name, for in spiritually it is a matter of faith that there is power in the name of God. That is why a Hindu in the expression of 'Ishwar' finds solace, so a Christian in the expression of God, a Sikh in the expression of 'Wahe Guru' and a Muslim in the expression of 'Allah'.

Politically, Sufism or Mysticism has a dominant role in the promotion of sense of oneness at universal level. God is just and dislikes injustice. For a politician it teaches to maintain the level of equality and equity and commitment in discharging his responsibilities rising above the differences between the poor and the rich, the black and the white, etc. It recommends him the best possible governance, awaking in him the reality that since God is the supreme ruler, he too as a vice-regent of God has to be sincere. He can strive for the attainment of peace, prosperity and sense of fraternity. After the world war 1st and world 2nd, the peace promoting policies gave emphasis upon cumulative oneness in diversity which is the hallmark of Sufism or Mysticism. With following the Sufi or the mystical principles, the field of judiciary can attain more strength in the sense that there is exceptional prominence on the subjects of good and evil and the true justice in spiritual domain. Moreover, Sufis provide practical nature to their religious traditions which connotes that every good plan and policy must be practical. Therefore, the spiritual school must be taken as a source of modernisation in the modern world for there is no modernity possible in the world in dissociation with what he really is and where he really has come from. Sufi teachings demand hermeneutical approach so as to realise the eternal role of Sufism in reshaping human life and human society.

Sufism or Mysticism helps man drop away the curtain of ignorance from his eyes when he seeks his reality of being and allows himself to confirm the Qur'anic teaching that water is the base of life. Biologically, he finds water as life agent in the form of sperm and blood. In addition to it, he philosophically happens to synthesise the same reality with the philosophy of Thales

"who said that everything is made of water" (Russell 33). And "Even the earth, according to Thales, is a disc floating on water" (Masih 4).

Biography of Farid-ud-Din Attar

Farid-ud-Din was a famous Persian poet, Sufi and hagiographer. His real name was Abu Hamid bin Abu Bakr Ibrahim, yet he is famous as Farid-ud-Din and Attar of Nishapur. His date of birth is given by different authorities at times between 1120 and 1157. The most accurate account of his life is given by Awfi and Tusi. However, whatever sources are available; they confirm that he was born in Nishapur- a major city of Khorasan, located now in northern side of Iran. It is said that he was the son of a prosperous chemist, which resulted in his excellent education in various fields. No doubt his works mention little about his life, but there is good mention about his dealing in Pharmacy and personally attended to very good number of people as customers. Eventually, after that he had encountered with a dervish at his shop, he gave up his pharmacy store in search of spiritual essence and reality.

During this course of his life, he travelled to Bagdad, Basra, Kufa, Damuscus, Khwarizna, Turkistan, Makkah, Madina and India. As mystification lies with his exact biography, so lies with his spiritual guide; there is no reliable reference about who his spiritual guide was, yet he was inspired by other towering spiritual saint whose name was Mansur Halaj, who is said to have surcharged Attar in dreams. In historical records available, his violent death is supposed to happen between 1193 and 1235. In 13th century, probably in the year 1221, it is recorded that when Mongols attacked Nishapur, inflicted and arrested Attar. As per a record that after sometime of his arrest, a man came with 1000 silver pieces to pay to the Mongol to set Attar free, whereupon Attar expressed rejection of release. Ultimately, another man came with a bag full of straw for Attar's release which angered the Mongols and in anger they butchered him mercilessly. In late 15th century, a memorial stone was erected over Attar's tomb which still remains as a minor shrine.

Works

1) *The Book of the God* (1976): The book in the Sufi ambits is mostly read and studied. It is about Sufi ideas. Historical importance of this book lies in the fact that this is the work that the aged Shaykh gave Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi when Rumi's family had stayed over at Nishapur heading to Konya, Turkey. This book is about Zuhd or asceticism having 6500 verses.

2) *The Book of Wisdom* (2018): The book, like other works, is a substantial one concerning about varied subjects like spiritual ecstasy, realisation of God, fleeting nature of the world, etc. in purely didactic method of expression.

3) *Book of Affliction*: This work gives a sheen description of the quest of the soul embodied by the pilgrim for unison and unity with the God. In this book, there are forty episodes put in an order that manifest Attar's spiritual views and experiences. It provides a detailed description about hierarchical status and standards of those people in search of truth and reality. This work is often treated as an epic for its grand style, theme and character. In it, a king tries to expose foolish desires of his sons by telling them a good number of spiritual stories.

4) *Muslim Saints and Mystics* (1966): In this book Attar provides an account of life stories of ever known Muslim saints along with four Imams. This book helps in understanding the life events and the spiritual teachings and methods of Muslim saints and their impact on the times they lived in and how they contributed to the social changes for higher values.

5) *The Conference of the Birds* (1984): This is one the greatest philosophical and spiritual poems ever written on the subject of human existence, human essence, spiritual enlightenment, self-annihilation, oneness of the souls, the quest for the eternal origin. This work of Farid-ud-Din Attar on approximately 4500 lines is ranked with John Bunyan's 'The Pilgrims Progress', Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales' and Dante's 'Divine Comedy'. As it is an allegory, there are birds representing human in spiritual quest. In this work, birds hold a conference during which they long to search their spiritual creator since all other beings cherish under their respected heads. Although there is brisk argumentation due to rational dichotomies but everything is resolved with their spiritual guide 'Hoopoe' who is to head them to their creator *Simorg*, which is Phoenix in Greek and English mythology. In Iranian mythology, this refers to a huge bird whose wings are stretched from the east to the west. "The conference of the Birds" became very popular in

Europe during 19th century and 20th century. It was translated into English by Edward Fitzgerald in 1885 and even by C.S Noll in 1954. Furthermore, a French translator of the Master piece was Garcin de Tassy in 1863.

Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti Movement refers to the tendency of number of Hindu saints in the medieval Hinduism that sought to bring religious reforms following the method of 'devotion' to achieve 'salvation'. It essentially originated in 8th century South India (presently Tamil Nadu and Kerala states), and spread northwards. It came over east and north India from the 15th century onwards, and reaching its zenith between the 15th and 17th century CE.

Regionally, the Bhakti Movement developed around many Gods and Goddesses (Vishnu), Shaivism (Shiv) Shaktism (Shakti Goddesses) and Smartism (a sect of Hinduism that allows its followers to worship more than one God). Bhakti teachings were preached in the local languages so that the message could reach the masses easily. The movement began with the purpose of reforming Hinduism against devilish practices like caste system and the dominance of Brahmins. Contemporary scholars raise questions whether the Bhakti movement ever was a reform or rebellion of any sort. This movement was inspired by Sufi poets and saints who possessed a wide range of philosophical positions ranging from theistic dualism of Davaita to absolute monism of Advaita Vedonta. The movement traditionally has been looked as an influential social reformation in Hinduism and provided an individual focused alternative path to spiritually regardless of one's birth or gender. Scriptures of the Bhakti Movement include the Bhagwat Gita, Bhagwata Purana and Padma Purana.

Terminologically, the word 'Bhakti' is derived from the root 'Bhaji' which means 'divide', share, 'portable', 'participate', 'to belong to'. It also means attachment, devotion, homage, faith or love and devotion to religious concepts or principles, engaging both emotions and intellect. Koren Pechelis mentions that the word 'Bhakti' should not be understood as uncritical emotion, yet as committed involvement. Bhakti movement in Hinduism entails ideas and involvement, emerging in the middle period on the subjects of devotion and love to the religious concepts made around one or more gods and goddesses. On the line of Bhakti Movement did fall poets, writers and musicians resulting in the surge of Hindu literature's familiarity with the instruments

of Alvars and Nayanars, poems of Bhagat Pipa, Allena Prabhu Andal, Akka Mahadevi, Kabir, Nanak, Tulsidas, Nabha Dass, Gusainya Ramananda, Ravidas, Sri Padaraja, Vyasatirtha, Purandara Dasa, Kanakadassa, Ajaya Dosa. Six Goswamis, etc. In addition, the earliest writers from 7th to 10th century CE also have contributed to the Bhakti Sophia among whom Sambinda, Tirunavukarasur, Sundaras, Nammalvas, Adi Shankara, Manikkavalakkar and Nathamuni. Even in 11th and 12th century writers developed their thoughts like Ramanuja, Mahava, Vallabha and Nimbarka in Vedic school of Hinduism who were highly eminent in maintaining Bhakti tradition in medieval India.

Biography of Kabir

A great mystic, saint and poet, born in India named Kabir, is said to be born in the year 1440 and died in 1518. Some records even show 1350 as his birth year. Neither alternative is based on tradition. However, they are speculative reconstructions by modern scholars who apparently have difficulty with the abnormally long life span. The name 'Kabir' means something 'very big' and 'great'. Kabir was born in Varanasi to a Brahmin widower at Lahartara. As per records available, his mother abandoned Kabir to avoid disrespect marriage and was up- kept in poor muslim weavers. Vaishnavu Saint Ramananda accepted Kabir as his disciple. When Ramananda died, Kabir was 13 years old.

Kabir has been greatly influential in Indian religious and spiritual traditions. Kabir Panth is a huge religious community that identifies Kabir as the originator of Sant Mat Sect and whose members (Kabir Panthis) spread and propagated Kabir's legacy to the different parts of India.

Kabir's poetry is knotted in pithy, prudential substance dealing mainly with the serious spiritual subjects, revealing the divine essence via direct inner quest. 'Bijak' is considered his ever famous work which means 'the Seedling' projects the Universal view of spirituality. "His poems resonate with the praise for the true Guru who reveals the divine through direct experience and denounces more usual ways of attaining God-union such as chanting, austerities, etc." (Pandey 11). What an Epic distinction of Kabir's literary contribution is found in the fact he necessitated coordination between Hinduism and Islam by showing a universal path in the two religious traditions.

Works

***The Bijak of Kabir* (1986):** 'The Bijak of Kabir' is a sacred book compiled by the followers of Kabir Das and translated by Linda Hess and Sukhdev Singh. The word 'Bijak' itself means an 'anthology', 'guide' or 'compilation'. This book is a center of his spiritual teachings. This book contains 353 short and shorter poems embossing spiritual message. It revolves around the concepts like worldly transience, true being, spiritual bliss, ultimate truth, etc. All versions of Bijak include 3 sections which are Ramaini, Sabbda and Sakhi.

***The Ocean of Love* (1982):** This poem possesses key importance in understanding Kabir's Spiritual school of thought. It is all about the concept of time and eternity and mutuality between the two serious subjects. This mentions Kabir's faith that the physical universe is mere tiny part of the universe as a whole which exposes series of levels until eternity reached.

***Songs of Kabir* (1915):** This book is a collection of hundred poems of Kabir in purely poetic diction, translated by Rabindranath Tagore. In these poems a wide range of mystical experiences are propagated. Love for the God and the concept of visionary being find spontaneous expressions like others. Kabir is seen the believer of transcendental being of man akin to the universe.

***Songs of Kabir* (2011):** The collection of more than 100 poems of Kabir which is translated by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra and prefaced by Windy Doniger, talks about series of sublime topics particularly on the subject of 'oneness of beings' (pantheism). The work cites the world as matter of colors or a mere delusion.

Review of Literature

***The Conference of the Birds* (1984):** The book by Farid-Ud-Din Attar is the main storehouse of spiritual consciousness. In Iranian Sufism, it is a must read and has got highly scholarly favour. This book sheds enormously light on the subject of merging of human soul with the absolute reality or God which according to Attar is the end all of the human existence.

***Sufism: The Heart of Islam* (2010):** The book, by Sadia Dehlvi, presents many methodological features of Sufism. It provides crystal clear explanation to many mystical terms in a lucid

manner. There is list of great Muslim Sufi poets and saints given in the book that helps the reader to have proper acknowledgement and familiarity of how mystical continuum headed forward.

***Songs of Kabir* (2011):** This book, translated by Arvind Krishna Mahrotra, helps to study on Kabir's spiritual universe and make it possible to let the readers know and understand poems, of the poet since it provides clear translation. The book is comprised of more than 100 songs. This book thematically runs on the subject of divine love, divine origin of man, true felicity, true liberation etc.

***Songs of Kabir* (2015):** This book has been translated by Tagore in a pure poetic diction. It offers to the reader an impassionate mystical understanding of Kabir's Spiritual domain.

***The Bijak of Kabir* (2001):** This book translated by Linda Hess and Sukhdev Singh, is highly substantial in nature since it cherishes the taste of having familiarity with Kabir's teaching with the provision of three hundred and forty eight short poems of 4 lines. This book speaks volumes of ephemeral nature of world, human existence, concept of God consciousness, etc.

***The Bhagwad Gita: Symphony of the Spirit* (2013):** This book interpreted by R.R.Verma, helps to understand the basic tenets of Indian Hindu mysticism. It clarifies many mystical complex questions and provides terse explanation to hundreds of mystical terms and stages. The concepts like Brahma, virtue, super soul, good, evil, etc. are demystifyingly discussed here in the book.

***Sri Aurobindo and Sufism* (2018):** Indian mysticism in relation to Sufism is scholarly compared here in the book written by M.G Umar. It sheds light on the evolution on Muslim Sufism and its close bearing with Hindu mysticism. More important about the book is that it rests around the mystical tradition of Aurobindo.

***Philosophy of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam* (2014):** This book, by Suman Lata, highlights the similarities and dissimilarities among the three religions. It mentions the basic tenets and principles of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Thus, it helps to know spiritual teachings also.

***Saint Kabir: Life and his Philosophy* (2020):** This book, by Dr Rakesh Kumar Pandey, offers to the readers, to a great extent, information about Kabir's life and his association with Bhakti Movement. It motivates the readers to study Kabir's mysticism and his teachings.

Knowing Sant Kabir: Life and his Teachings **(2012):** This book by Prof Shrikant Prasoon talks about Kabir's life and some of his basic mystical teachings and helps in less time to have understanding of them in brief.

Osho: The Revolutionary Talks on Kabir **(2008):** In this book Osho brings alive of the Indian mystic Kabir with fiery interpretation and justification. It highlights fundamentals of Kabir's mystical methods and Philosophy of truth reality.

Justification

Sufism as a mystical discipline is holistically held as the religious substance and for the attainment of it "One has to get beyond all special and temporal domains into spiritual domains to get near to God who is pure absolute being" (Umar 69-70). In the world of matter in which utter faith in reason and thereupon, the overwhelming of doubt and incredulity on existence, has led the man to be oblivious to his reality, though has chiseled and bedecked the world scientifically with multifarious breakthroughs. As in the past it has been, Sufism or Mysticism has vital role to play in synthesising human nature with his divine source. Present man is set to fall in the net of uncertainties of his life. No doubt, there is extreme development seen in the objective world of humanity, man is lagging behind spiritually. Therefore, he is reversed to his own self in sheer self hoodwinking. Reason and Science are not other than the aspects of spirituality, rather they ascertain things in many ways collaboratively and collectively with spirituality which Sufism or Mysticism holds as truth. Unfortunately, man has distanced himself from his reality and his absolute reality, has lost what Dr. Faustus did in Marlowe's play. He is seen facing purposelessness best voiced in Albert Camus' 'Myth of Sisyphus' and 'Waiting for Godot' by Samuel Beckett. The proposed research shall be a comparative study on Kabir and Farid-Ud-Din Attar on the subject of "Oneness with God". It shall be a unique study aiming at how man can synthesise himself with his spiritual origin.

Objectives:

1) To critically give introduction to Indian Sufism and Iranian Sufism.
2) To critically study the biographies of two Sufi poets.
3) To comparatively assess the nature of Sufism, its need and importance in human life.

4) To logically synthesise the spiritual message of God by the two Sufi poets.

5) To study and rehash the concept of Sufism and Mysticism and their role in human awakening.

6) To defend Spirituality against heretical views.

7) To bring out universal elements in Hindu Sufism and Iranian Sufism.

Hypothesis

Indian and Iranian Sufism share innumerable points of thematic similarities and semblance. Undoubtedly, despite some differences in mystical ways and methods, these two different spiritual traditions believe in the universal good and goodness. Love, compassion, brotherhood, and concept of divinity find a spacious place in both of them. There is crystal-clear concept of self realisation as the path to God or Brahma realisation.

Area of Study

Literature mirrors all domains of human life. It is the most effective means of exploring the social setup: socially, religiously, culturally, etc. As such, literature has been also means for the Sufi poets for the expression of their spiritual or mystical experiences, the reality they find in their mystical endeavors and their teachings thereupon. One finds plethora of literature on the subject of Sufism. Poets indirectly give vent to their spiritual secrets and in the same scheme of things Indian and Iranian Sufism are at greater length engrained in the relative traditional literature. The area of study shall be an endeavor of making a comparative study on Farid-ud-Din Attar's and Kabir's concept of oneness with God. For this auspicious study, the selected works of the two poets shall be deeply consulted and worked upon. Such a kind of study shall be a breakthrough in uniting and unifying the distinctive spiritual and mystical ethos. It will help in deeper understanding of the divergent faiths in spirituality and the impact of spiritual domains of other fields of human life. It shall envision the people in finding out the universal message of oneness with their origin of existence. Undoubtedly, the fact that belonging to different soils with many unique points in their mystical thoughts, they do bear similar and equivocal features on the concepts like self realisation, nature of microcosm world, nature of macrocosm world, etc. To discern the subject of oneness with God among all such features shall let the study be clear and logical.

Tentative Chapterisation

The proposed research work aims at thorough study of selected works of Farid-ud-Din Attar and Kabir to have proper understanding of their spiritual teaching of oneness with God. The tentative framework of the study is as follows:

1) Introduction to Sufism: A detailed introduction to Sufism shall be given encompassing Bhakti teachings and Iranian Sufism.

2) Introduction to the two spiritual poets shall be given in detail and all information about them shall be included minutely. Critical views shall also be included.

3) A terse preview of the succeeding chapters shall be given.

4) A review of literature in addition to detailed explanation to the methodology shall be given.

Chapter-1 'The Concept of Oneness with God' in Iranian Sufism and Bhakti Teachings

This chapter shall discuss 'The Concept of Oneness with God' in general Iranian Sufism and Bhakti Sufism. It shall include the great Sufis and Mystics that come up with concept very clearly. This chapter shall pave way to second chapter accordingly.

Chapter-2 Farid-ud-Din Attar on 'The Concept of Oneness with God'

In this chapter the study shall be trying to find out 'The Concept of Oneness with God' by Farid-ud-Din Attar with special reference to his ever famous work 'The Conference of the Birds'. This chapter shall be broader for clear and exact understanding about the concept.

Chapter-3 Kabir on 'The Concept of Oneness with God'

This chapter shall be dealing with concept by Kabir with special reference to his works in English translation. It shall be studying the works: 'The Bijak of Kabir', 'The Ocean of Love', 'The Songs of Kabir' by Tagore and 'The Songs of Kabir' by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra.

Chapter-4 Comparative study on 'The Concept of Oneness with God' between Farid-ud-Din Attar and Kabir

This chapter shall be the main study of the comparative research on the subject of the topic between Farid-ud-Din Attar and Kabir. It shall provide the deep analysis and insight. It shall see through similarities and dissimilarities on the concept and shall infer the universality of their thought in their selected works.

Chapter- 5 Conclusion

Methodology

Sufism which is commonly named as 'Mysticism' is an experience of spiritual concern or in other words a direct oneness with ultimate reality by the mystics. It opens gates to knowledge of God as all powerful, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Ever Eternal though subjective origin of the spiritual quest. Kabir Das and Farid-ud-Din Attar though lived in distant lands with distant and unique life tradition, on the spiritual subject, have in their works same or similar themes and substance. Both of the two spiritual icons share consensus on the subjects of 'oneness of God', 'reality of life', 'concept of time', 'true liberation', etc. The research shall purely be done on Attar's "The Conference of the Birds" and Kabir's "The Bijak of Kabir", "Songs of Kabir" by Tagore and "Songs of Kabir" by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra.

As such, the reach on their works shall be purely analytical, interpretative, critical and comparative on the parameters of 'cultural studies' to determine their contribution to the regional culture as well as universal culture, for this domain encompasses the study and analysis of all aspects of human life. "Cultural Studies believes that 'Culture' of a community includes various aspects: economic, spatial, ideological, erotic and political" (Nayar 6). As it is a fact that Sufism bears a front position in being one of the domains of a culture aiming at the human excellence in human-behavior, it works for the spiritual awakening in human to be an accepted being and to be in unison with God thus. The approach of 'cultural studies' to be applied to the mystical domains of Farid-ud-Din Attar and Kabir shall help in understanding the cultural ethos of the two different worlds with special reference to their selected works and shall come up with the cultural synthesis to bring out the higher values like love, brotherhood, sense of oneness, and promote on universal map. Cultural studies as a newly approach "is the mode of generating meanings and ideas" (4). When it shall work upon the topic, it shall unearth and divulge the meanings and clear dimensions of spiritual arena which have close association with life actuality.

The ‘cultural studies approach’ shall offer crystal clear method of knowing what relations and divine powers are there for the actual framework of an ideal society which is tremendously discussed under the concept of Culture. Cultural studies enable for the study or research of manifold paradigms to look and investigate any facet of the culture in relation to the totality of the culture and verified is thus that it shall work upon the topic with full resilience. Since it is rich and multifaceted, its roots are found in the nature of Structuralism, Post Structuralism, Deconstruction, Marxism, Postmodernism, Feminism, Queer Theory, Postcolonial Theory, etc, one finds it multidisciplinary as a whole. On the basis of openness to any approach analysis, different critics and theoreticians have contributed to the cultural studies in abundance. The most famous figures are given below:

1) Louis Althusser (1918-1990): He is a staunch Marxist critic and philosopher who has left a great mark on Cultural Studies. He raises many important questions about the ‘Ideology’ and its impact on the frame of culture. In this regard, his essay “Ideology and Ideological Apparatus” is a must to be read and studied.

2)Mathew Arnold(1822-1888): A great literary critic and poet, always famous for his critical work “Culture and Anarchy”, published in the year 1864, in which he while talking about culture holds that it is the study of perfection and compares it with the system of anarchy.

3) Roland Barthes (1915-1980): Ever famous for Semiotic Theory, Barthes was a great literary critic who stressed for breaking down of signs of the real interpretation. His best work is “Mythologies”, published in the year 1957.

4) Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007): He is considered as a sharp critic of contemporary society, culture and thought. In his famous work “Simulacra and Simulation”, published in 1981, Baudrillard claims that our present society has replaced all reality and meaning with symbols and signs, and that human experience is a simulation of reality.

5)T.S. Eliot (1888-1965): T.S. Eliot was a great poet and critic of the 20th century, best known for his poetic work ‘The Wasteland’, and in literary criticism for the theory of ‘Tradition and Individual Talent’. So far his critical insight is concerned, he voices about the culture and varied related things in his work “Notes Towards the Definition of Culture” that was published in 1948

in which he primarily sheds light on culture as organic, shared system of beliefs. It is a channel of transmission of all the elements that fall in culture.

6) Michel Foucault (1926-1984): Michel Foucault's studies are about the society, the role of power in it, its productive task, etc. His works offer to the 'Cultural Studies' scope for widening its theoretical boundaries. His famous work regarding the subject is "Madness and Civilization" that came in lime light in the year 1965.

7) Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937): Gramsci is famously known for his theory of 'Cultural Hegemony' in which it is found that how the state and ruling capitalist class– the bourgeoisie– use cultural institutions to maintain power in capitalist habitations. His "Prison Notebooks" (1948) is treated as a land mark in the field of Cultural Studies.

8) Stuart Hall (1932-2014): He as a cultural critic and theoretician is said to be the pivotal figure in the expansion of cultural studies to deal with race and gender. He is said to be the first to introduce the cultural studies in United Kingdom. His best work is "Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices" (1997).

9) Richard Hoggart (1895-2014): Richard Hoggart was a British Academician whose fields range from Sociology and English Literature to cultural studies. His ever famous work about the Culture is "The Uses of Literacy", published in the year 1957.

10) F.R Leavis (1895-1978): Leavis was a distinguished literary critic of the mid-20th century, ever famous for his work "Mass Civilization and Minority Culture" published in the year 1930. He believes that generations face it hard to suit themselves to one another. He longs for the creation of singular culture for everyone, instead of individual values and traditions.

11) Jean-Francois Lyotard (1925-1988): In his "The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1979), he argues that the postmodern condition is the economic or cultural state or condition of society which is said to exist after modernity. He was a French philosopher, sociologist, and literary theorist.

12) Edward Said (1935-2003): His book 'Orientalism' that was published in 1978 is a reaction against the negative attitude and analysis done to the Eastern Literature and Culture and believes that re-approach is a must to analyse and critique over the Eastern cultural domains. He believes

in the unbiased literary and cultural study for the actual interpretation of Eastern cultural heritage.

13) E.P Thompson (1924-1994): Thompson's main critical focus is on English artisan and working class society and tries to add humanistic futures to social history.

14) Raymond Williams (1921-1988): A famous Welsh Socialist Writer, Academician, Novelist and Critic. His works evolved the Marxist Criticism of culture and the arts. His famous work "Culture and Society" (1958) is primarily on the subject of culture developed in response to the Industrial Revolution and the socio-political changes thereupon. Culture he believes as "a whole way of life."

Expected Outcome of the Research

This research shall expose the secrets of spiritual essence in accordance with the teachings of these two saints who belong to different soils, yet are found equally unanimous on the subject of oneness with God. Both of these saints believe duality as a curtain of ignorance between man and God. This proposed research shall come up with logical explanation to Sufi teachings. It shall be purely tested on the touchstone of scholarly status. Is shall be helpful to discern other ethereal and hidden spiritual dimensions in a demystified manner.

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